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Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 174 (2015) 2926 – 2933

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**Procedia**  
Social and Behavioral Sciences

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INTE 2014

## Positioning in business administration education at universities established in 2006: a content analysis on strategic drivers and curriculum

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### Abstract

In 2006, 15 new universities were established within the scope of the Law, No. 5467 in Turkey. Business administration departments have been established in 14 of these 15 universities. These departments have been either initiated or transferred from older to the newly established universities. These departments have been studied to find out whether they have positioned themselves to train personnel for either private sector or public organizations. A conceptual content analysis has been carried out on lesson plans and courses have been evaluated on the concept of "business administration course". Departments have been categorized based on the density of business administration course among all other courses. While classifying, mission and vision declared by the department and curriculum along with the curriculum of Department of Business Administration of Istanbul Culture University, which allege to train human resources for businesses, are taken as a control variable. In addition, general information, mission and vision of departments which are classified based on course density have been examined and they have been analyzed whether their personnel education declarations show linearity with curriculum. As a result of all these analyses, it has been concluded that some departments can be classified in terms of course density; all departments actually try to train human resources as much as their own possibilities and that of the country permit; departments do not position themselves especially in a field and there is no linearity between course densities and mission and vision declarations of departments.

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Peer-review under responsibility of the Sakarya University

**Keywords:** Positioning, Curriculum, Strategic Drivers and Content Analysis

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## 1. Introduction

The process of opening of new universities has essentially gained momentum after 2006. 93 universities were established in Turkey from 2006 until 2013 (Doğan, 2013). Most of these 93 universities have been separated previously established universities. We can say that there are both benefits in separating from previously established universities in terms of both academic and administrative organization as well as in the context of execution board. On 01.03.2006 fifteen State Universities were founded in accordance with Article 5 of the Law No. 5467 adopted by the General Assembly of the Parliament. Some of these 15 universities took over the Faculty of Economics and Administrative and thus the Departments of Business Administration from other universities and these departments had long been continuing their academic life. Some have been re-established as a department and faculty.

The goal of study is basically to analyse whether these departments have been positioned train personnel to the private sector or public sector organizations by conducting a content analysis of the courses covered in curriculum of Business Administration departments, which are under the roof Economics and Administrative Sciences Faculty or other faculties of 15 universities established especially in 2006, as well as conducting the analysis over strategic drivers such as vision, mission and other objectives of the departments. As a result of the study, differences, if there are, between formerly established departments and those established in 2006 will be found out. In addition, there will be the possibility to mention to the problems of all newly established departments.

In order to achieve the goal of study, main concepts of the study, positioning, vision, mission and strategic objectives which form primarily the theoretical framework are explained and are evaluated in the context of the Business Administration Department. Then, the research method is described. The data obtained using this method is reviewed.

As a marketing concept, positioning is basically the image of any product or service in businesses against directly competing products or services to them or even against the other products or services that the same company produce (Tek, 1997). According to another definition, positioning is the activity of designing image and offers regarding products and services of companies in order to arouse a distinctive image in the minds of individuals in the target market. Essentially, positioning is a strategic administration decision regarding to where the products or services will be addressed within a particular market (Hiam & Rastelli, 2007). The concept of positioning is not merely the concept of marketing a product or service. For example, a political party can be said to be positioning itself in the political arena. This issue is examined in terms of political science. According to Denton (1988), who has conducted studies on this subject, parties position themselves depending on the desires and determination of party leaders. Based on this positioning process, parties conduct image studies and identify policies to be applied. How will we define the positioning of a department at a university in the context of these definitions? The most simple answer of this problem is, expressed by Arlı (2012), if positioning is an activity imposed in the minds of people regarding any image, then, it is an the image clarification activity in the minds of people concerning the specific section. Who are the people interested in the business departments? First of all potential students, current students, parents of students, faculty members, market of demand for labour, other authorized people or bodies. The positioning of the business departments is an effort to detect in the minds of individuals that we have mentioned for what purposes those departments offer education and more importantly to identify for which sectors these departments train personnel.

If we consider in this context, areas in which graduates of business departments are employed gain importance. Business departments can offer education for one or several or all of those departments. Graduates of business departments generally are employed in/as:

1 Private Sector: as officers or managers in departments such as business marketing, accounting, finance, human resources, foreign trade, etc.; as clerk, manager or specialist in banks; as officers or expert in accounting and auditing firm; as expert in insurance companies; as private sector employees in many areas such as advertising and public relations expertise.

2 Public Sector: as staff in the public sector based on the scores obtained in public examinations, with the Type A (Assistant Expert, Expertise, Inspectors, District Administrative Judges) Squad or Type B (Computer Operator, Clerical Work, etc.).

3 Entrepreneurship: as the owner of his/her own business

4 Academician: as research assistant or teaching assistant at schools offering administration education.

Do business departments prepare educational program choosing some of these four areas? This question is the basic question of our research. In order to answer this question, a content analysis will be carried out covering 4-year curriculums of business departments in 15 universities mentioned above, and –if there are- written statement regarding strategic drivers and employment opportunities of each university.

Strategic drivers are vision, mission and basic goals. Because when an organization creates a corporate strategy, its work is identified with internal and external environmental analysis as well as mission, vision and objectives; hence, the work will be clearly defined. Mission statement explains why an institution established and why it exists. In the context of mission statement, one can find which goods or services are produced how and for which markets and one can also find the business philosophy, values and approaches that distinguish the organization from others. Vision statement is a declaration on where and how an organization sees itself in the future. In the context of mission statement, one can find dreams are visions that the organization carry out good work in the future. The objectives are the conclusions expressing what an organization has done and why it has done so to get what. The objectives are conclusions which are more obvious, tangible, measurable, comparable and free of time limit (Ülgen & Mirze, 2010).

As well as four-year course content of Business Administration Departments, mission, vision and objectives statements related to departments, given in the general information section on the website of the departments, are covered into content analysis and this study tries to find out for which sector - private sector, public institutions or entrepreneurship- the departments train personnel. Some can clearly think that Business Administration Departments are units training personnel for private sector. However, in recent years, despite witnessing that it has changed a little, one of the most important realities of our country is that people dominantly see the state by which they "ensure their position". We can say that especially mothers and fathers see the employment in public organizations as "job guarantee" and "fixed income guarantee" for their children. What we say is valid especially for lower and middle income group families. Our aim is not to criticize this approach or reveal the fallacy of this approach, but to analyse what level business administration departments train personnel to be employed in public institutions cannot be the only explanation of the understanding above. Public institutions in Turkey are clearly still one of the most important employment institutions and issues such as "job guarantee", "wage" or "career blockage" drive our young people to be employed in public institutions. In addition, employing personnel into prestigious occupations such as expertise, inspector, and administrative judge or district governors from business administration departments attracts both the business department managers and young people studying at business administration departments to public examinations.

On the other hand, the fact that business administration departments train personnel to be employed in public institutions cannot be the only explanation of the understanding above. Public institutions in Turkey are clearly still one of the most important employment institutions and issues such as "job guarantee", "wage" or "career blockage" drive our young people to be employed in public institutions. In addition, employing personnel into prestigious occupations such as expertise, inspector, and administrative judge or district governors from business administration departments attracts both the business department managers and young people studying at business administration departments to public examinations.

## 2. Research

### 2.1. Methodology

Content analysis method has been used in the research. The analysis which is carried out by following a certain path, sticking to impartiality and making use of numbers is called content analysis and the aim is to determine the variables in a text and the relationships between these variables (Wimmer and Dominick, 2000). Including a series of rules, content analysis is a research method carried out to draw conclusions from the texts. The desired result to be obtained may be related to the message itself and it may also be related to the sender of the message and its counterparts. Content analysis can be applied when to code answers given for open-ended questions; to detect the intention or other features of those giving a message; to identify an existing propaganda. Content analysis can be applied in reflecting cultural motifs of a group, an organization or a community; besides, it can be

applied to detect the intentions and goals of individuals, groups, organizations or communities (Weber, 1990). In this study, content analysis is applied to determine the objectives of business administration departments.

To carry out content analysis on the text covered in the sources, we need to code the texts or categorise or disassemble these texts in a way we can use. Given encoding may be in the form of words, the meanings of words, phrases or themes, that is topics. In the process following this encoding, one of three kinds of content analysis, 1. Thematically (conceptual) analysis; 2. Semantic Analysis; 3. Network Analysis can be used (Leblebici & Kılıç, 2004). Conceptual analysis technique is used in the study. Conceptual analysis is an analysis on the concept which is the subject of a discussion or document. In this analysis, concepts and topics of texts are primarily examined. Without being limited with some certain frameworks, whether any subject exists in a text or not can be examined with broader implementation feasibility through conceptual analysis; besides, the density of existing concept or concepts can be measured. (Leblebici & Kılıç, 2004a) It is also possible to classify words or phrases units through conceptual analysis. Word or phrase units related to a certain subject or concept can be gathered under certain categories (Leblebici & Kılıç, 2004b). In this context, courses covered in the curriculum in our study are categorized based on each business administration department and are determined how much is their density for each department. For example, law courses density of business administration departments is determined regarding the department of law. The weight of law courses shows us that part is given importance in public examinations.

According to Article 5 of Law No. 5467; Ahi Evran University, Kastamonu University, Düzce University, Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, Uşak University, Rize University, Namık Kemal University, Erzincan University, Aksaray University, Giresun University, Hittite University, Bozok University, Adiyaman University, Ordu University, Amasya University were established. According to Article 1 of Law No. 5467; Ahi University took over Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences from Hacettepe University, Uşak University from Afyon Kocatepe University, Aksaray University from Nigde University, Giresun University from Karadeniz Technical University, Hittite University from Gazi University, Bozok University from Erciyes University, Ordu University from Karadeniz Technical University

By examining how much courses covered in the curriculum intensify around 5 subjects composed of Business, Economics, Law, Finance, and other areas, we try to make inferences on whether there is positioning or not. If courses of Economics, Law, Finance, and other areas in the departments are more intense, this will give us the information that there is an inclination for public examination in those departments. When deciding this, we will need control variables. The density of courses of the departments which especially state to train human resources to the private sector will be studied and the density of departments founded in 2006 can be assessed with this comparison.

## 2.2. Results and Assessments

In order to better review the collected results, we show whether education initial years, general information, mission-vision-objectives and curriculums of business administration department in 15 universities covered in this study in Table 1 are available or not.

**Table 1. Available Information Related to the Department of Business Administration Departments**

Name of the University	Establishment Year	Available Information about the department
Ahi Evran	2012-2013	Curriculum
Kastamonu	2011-2012	Course Content and General Information
Düzce	2011-2012	Curriculum, Statement of Head of Department, About the Department
M. Akif Ersoy	2012-2013	ECTS, Statement of Head of Department, Mission and Vision Statements
Uşak	2003-2004	Curriculum, General Information
Rize (R.T.Erdoğan)	2009-2010	Curriculum, Objective of the Department and About the Department
Namık Kemal	2010-2011	Course Credit Scheme, About Business Administration Department
Erzincan	2009-2010	Syllabus, About the Department- Mission and Vision Statements
Aksaray	2003-2004	Curriculum, About the Department

Giresun	2008-2009	Curriculum, Information form of Business Administration Department
Hitit	1998-1999	Syllabus, Statement of Head of Department
Bozok	1995-1996	Curriculum, Introduction of the Department
Adıyaman	2009-2010	Curriculum, About Our Department, Mission and Vision Statements
Ordu	1994-1995	Curriculum, Message of Head of Department, Mission and Vision Statements
Amasya	Not Open	---

As can be seen in Table 1, four-year curriculum of all departments are available, while data on general information of many departments are not available. Mission and vision statements of five departments are available, while objective statements of two of the departments are available. In almost all departments, mission and vision statements of not the department itself but the faculty of the department are available (as a result of the screening of the main pages of faculties to which the departments belong as of 05/21/2014). Therefore, it can be expressed that departments of business administrations have mission and vision statements generally shared with departments such as public administration, economics, finance, labour economics, and international relations. This fact shows us that most of the business administration departments in the universities established in 2006 have not a particular statement that they train human resources for the private sector. In Table 2, we study how much the course of business administration intensifies in the departments of law, economics, finance and others. Course intensity apart from business administration department shows us that the department give importance to education for public examination.

**Table 2. The distribution of courses to the areas**

Departments University	Business		Law		Economics		Finance		Other	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
<i>Istanbul Culture</i>	<u>60</u>	<u>71,42</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4,76</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5,92</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>17,90</u>
Ahi Evran	37	57,81	9	14,06	6	9,37	0	0	12	18,75
Kastamonu	89	70,07	13	10,23	8	6,29	1	0,78	16	12,59
Düzce	60	61,85	7	7,21	8	8,24	2	2,06	20	20,64
M.A.Ersoy	49	70,00	7	10,00	5	7,14	1	1,42	8	11,44
Uşak	46	60,52	5	6,57	6	7,89	2	2,63	17	22,39
R.T.Erdoğan	69	68,31	6	5,94	7	6,93	2	1,98	17	16,84
Namık Kem.	23	48,93	6	12,76	5	10,63	0	0	13	27,68
Erzincan	43	53,08	10	12,34	11	13,58	1	1,23	16	19,77
Aksaray	71	62,28	7	6,14	18	15,78	1	0,87	17	14,93
Giresun	62	72,94	6	7,05	3	3,52	1	1,17	13	15,32
Hitit	35	44,30	11	13,92	12	15,18	0	0	21	26,6
Bozok	49	55,68	10	11,36	9	10,22	0	0	20	22,77
Adıyaman	57	63,33	6	6,67	9	10	3	3,33	15	16,67
Ordu	80	74,76	5	4,67	6	5,60	2	1,86	14	13,11

As seen in Table 2, business administration departments of universities established in 2006 are assessed considering course density of business administration department of Istanbul Kültür University (İKÜ). This is because business administration department of Istanbul Kültür University has presented in its Course and Program Outcomes Matrix that the university train professional managers for businesses (Course-Program Outcomes Matrix, [iku.edu.tr](http://iku.edu.tr)). Therefore, business administration department of İKÜ will be considered as a control variable.

As seen in Table 2, density of business administration courses among all other courses is 71.42%, while the total weight of the other departments is 28.58%. At the same time, when the curriculum of business administration department is analysed (Program Curriculum, [iku.edu.tr](http://iku.edu.tr)), courses taken from other departments are generally about functions and activities of administration. When stating this, of course, we do not mean that other courses of other departments do not support business functions and activities. Yet, we can say that it is directly related with the areas from which questions come in public examinations.

As seen in Table 2, departments which are related business- courses up to the level of 70% or over are in Ordu, Giresun, Kastamonu and Mehmet Akif Ersoy universities. Those which are between the levels of 60% and 70% are the departments of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Adıyaman, Duzce, Usak and Aksaray universities. The levels are

between 50% and 60% in Erzincan and Bozok universities, while it is between 40% and 50% Hittites and Namik Kemal universities. When we compare them with İKÜ business administration department which we taken as control variable, we see that there are departments mainly train professional managers for the private sector as well as considering the public sector. In this context, the information given about the department along with mission-vision statements of departments are analysed whether the departments are positioned to train human resources for the public or the private sector.

When we look at the Department Chair Message, Mission and Vision Statements ([unyeiibf.odu.edu.tr](http://unyeiibf.odu.edu.tr)) of Ordu University which 70% or over of courses are related to business administration, we see an emphasis on the objective of training personnel both for private and public sector. If business administration department Information Form and statements of objective-mission-vision and core values of departments at Giresun University are analysed ([iibf.giresun.edu.tr](http://iibf.giresun.edu.tr)), they emphasise that they have created a curriculum equivalent to those at European universities within the framework of Bologna process in 2010-2011 academic year and they do not emphasize whether they train human resources for the private or the public sector. If we look at the departments of Kastamonu University, it is emphasized in the general information (General Information, [iibf.kastamonu.edu.tr](http://iibf.kastamonu.edu.tr)) that there is a selective course structure which can prepare students for public examinations, business professionals in organizations, scholarship. When Message of the Head of the Department, Mission and Vision Statements ([iibf.mehmetakif.edu.tr](http://iibf.mehmetakif.edu.tr)) of Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, Department of Business Administration Department are analysed, the department primarily aims to train personnel for the organizations, but the graduate can also be employed in the public sector or even they can be entrepreneurs. As seen from the statement of these departments, all departments apart from that of Giresun, they emphasize that they train human resources for the public sector.

When we analyse About Department of Business Administration and Department Objectives ([iibf.erdogan.edu.tr](http://iibf.erdogan.edu.tr)) of Recep Tayyip Erdogan University at which the density of courses in business administration is about 60% to 70%, we see that training managers for the organizations is emphasized. When we look at About Department of Business Administration at Adiyaman University and Mission and Vision statements ([isletme.adiyaman.edu.tr](http://isletme.adiyaman.edu.tr)), an emphasis is made, without mentioning whether for the public or private sector, to train human resources to the business world in general. When the Message of the Head of Business Administration and About the Department of Düzce University are analysed ([if.duzce.edu.tr](http://if.duzce.edu.tr)), we see they emphasise that they train entrepreneurs and professional business managers. The emphasis on the public sector is only limited to human resource needs of public enterprises. When we look at general information statement of Department of Business Administration at Usak University ([iibf.usak.edu.tr](http://iibf.usak.edu.tr)), they emphasise that they train human resources for the public and private sector. Aksaray University declares with About the Department of Business Administration ([isletme.aksaray.edu.tr](http://isletme.aksaray.edu.tr)) statement that its objective is to train individuals for the private and public sectors. As seen, in this group, comparatively have a lower level of business administration course density than the former group, only departments of Aksaray and Usak Universities put an emphasis that they train human resources for the public sector.

When we look at Mission, Vision statements ([erzincan.edu.tr/birim/?git=12](http://erzincan.edu.tr/birim/?git=12)) at the Department of Business Administration of Erzincan University at which 50% to 60% of courses are about administration, we cannot say the department positions itself to train human resources for the business or the public sector. In general, all employment areas are discussed. When we read the introduction of Business Administration Department in Bozok University ([iibf.bozok.edu.tr](http://iibf.bozok.edu.tr)), they emphasize that the department train personnel for today's organizations without segregating any area. We cannot reach any mission and vision statement or the introduction of Department of Business Administration in Ahi University.

Administration courses cover about 40% to 50% of the total. In his presentation, Head of Department of Business Administration at Hittite University ([in.iibf.hitit.edu.tr](http://in.iibf.hitit.edu.tr)), the education is given to train business professionals, yet graduates can be employed in enterprises and public institutions. When the declaration of Department of Business Administration in Namik Kemal University ([iibf-is.web.nku.edu.tr](http://iibf-is.web.nku.edu.tr)) is analysed, especially, the importance of training human resources to businesses is highlighted; besides, the public sector is also taken into account.



## Conclusion

When the business administration course in business management departments is mentioned, one should not infer that "other courses are not related to administration". Of course, members and administrators of faculty of business administration department are experts in the field. Their thoughts and applications about how students should be trained are complete and in place. The result we want to achieve here is that some of business administration departments are to determine their courses to enable their students to be successful in public examinations. Some of the faculty members in business administration consider management education as a training process which should be structured to train human resources solely for the private sector. According to them, advanced level of public law and private law or economics courses are not suitable for business administration departments and they do not serve the purpose. Some faculty members, however, think that it is not suitable to say that I merely train business administrators or personnel for the organizations in our country's current conditions (for example; business department students can be administrative judges, governors or inspectors; besides, employment is a hardship in the country). Therefore, it is necessary to train students to be employed in the public or private sector.

If we evaluate the issue in this context, we can say that departments emphasize the objective of training human resources for businesses. However, under the terms of employment in Turkey we can say that there is also an emphasis on training professional managers for public institutions in accordance with law regarding the right of Faculties of Economics and Administrative Sciences in the public examinations.

With elective courses particularly in 3rd and 4th classes, departments focus on training students in a particular area. However, these areas are often one of departments of business administration such as management and organization, accounting and finance, quantitative methods; therefore, the focus is on business functions. This practice can be regarded positively in terms of specialization of student who can work in different parts of businesses as well as loading information.

On the other hand, it would not be very proper to ask the department of business administration to adapt itself to train personnel for the private sector or position itself to train human resources for the public sector. As a result of some reasons caused by both inner environment of the department itself (faculty member quality and quantity, etc.), and outer environment (the university, city, region in which the department exists, socio-cultural conditions, etc.), we can say that departments can position themselves to train human resources for both public and private sector.

In order to increase the reliability and validity of the findings, chosen sample may need to be further expanded. At the same time, it may be necessary to explore the level of words and concepts covered in the curriculums more depth. A comparative analyse can be conducted by studying the curriculums, department introduction, mission and vision statements of business administration departments established before 2006 and those of more prestigious business administration departments in Turkey. Thus, the answer for the question whether the departments position themselves to train human resources or not can be sought. However, is it necessary for departments to position themselves based on this study conducted on a limited ground? What is lost if not what is gained if there is positioning in newly established departments or not? How the course structure should be at a department which have positioned itself? These and similar questions may give some clues for this study.

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